Smart Board Reflection 2011

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I continue to be in awe of the fast pace at which technology changes in the 21st century. The incredible speed at which new hardware is developed and implemented as well as the rate at which our youth embraces this technology is amazing. I whole heartedly believe that as educators, we need to follow the lead of our youth and incorporate this technology into our teaching and learning.

This year has seen its share of ups and downs for me. I was able to meet some of my goals, but others have yet to be met as some unforeseen obstacles have made achieving them difficult. I moved to a new classroom within St. Marguerite, so I had to wait while my SMART board and the accompanying hardware were installed. This took me to about the end of October. I was hoping to be able to use technology to enhance my new teaching assignment of grades 4 – 8 Core French. In this area, I feel I was successful. The SMART board was a great tool to teach and review French vocabulary, although there were very few pre-made lessons on the web so I did have to make/reinvent as I went along. The students were also able to use technology to show their comprehension and fluency of Core French through Powerpoint presentations and other research projects. I was hoping to get the grade 8 class to use Glogster to make interactive posters, but we just ran out of time. I am hoping to incorporate more of this next year as my teaching assignment will stay the same. I am also taking a look at possibly doing some blogging in French. Crazy idea? I’m not too sure about this yet. There is a great deal to consider before committing to this project.

The one item I was hoping to be able to develop was a blog for all of my classes. Since I teach a variety of grades and classes, I thought it would be beneficial to create a blog to keep parents and students updated on assignments, due dates, etc. This is where those unforeseen roadblocks came up. I did create the blog; however I had a difficult time keeping it updated. As well, I created the blog in October, and few of the parents were aware of it and how to use it. Next year, I will have the blog ready to go for the new school year, and I will keep it updated regularly, as this will be my main goal. I believe this will be a useful tool to have as a prep teacher since it is difficult to track down students who have been absent and assignments that have not been handed in.

I do feel that I have progressed this year with my comfort level of technology. I have to say that as a prep teacher, it is much more difficult to incorporate it into my lessons as I only have a set amount of time with each of the classes. Often, by the time we get laptops set up, we only have a half hour to 45 minutes to actually work. It seems to take many classes to get something accomplished since I cannot schedule technology time longer than my set amount of minutes that I teach any given class. I am not sure what the solution is to this dilemma, but it is something that I will continue to work on in the coming year.

One area I am very pleased with has been the opportunity to share what I have learned about technology with the rest of my staff. They have been very open to learning new ways to incorporate this into their teaching. Many have embraced it with open arms, while others have been a bit more hesitant. I am glad that I have been able to help out with technological difficulties whenever the need arises. I hope to be able to keep learning and share more next year as our school has been given grant monies to implement technology and brain-based learning in new and innovative ways. This is a very exciting venture, and I hope that I will be able to contribute to make St. Marguerite a school that is looking towards the future needs of 21st century learners.

Overall, I am pleased with the knowledge that I have attained regarding technology during the 2010 – 2011 school year. I am more comfortable with the SMART board, and I feel as though I will be able to implement some of the social media sites into my teaching next year. I look forward to the technological direction that St. Marguerite will be taking through the grant project. It is an exciting time and one that I eagerly anticipate with much excitement.